

# HISTORY

---



1927	July 1 <sup>st</sup> the 108 <sup>th</sup> Observation Squadron, 33 <sup>rd</sup> Division Aviation was formed. 16 officers, 74 enlisted and PT-1 "Trusty" were assigned.
1930	Douglas O-2H biplanes are assigned to the 108 <sup>th</sup> Observation Squadron.
1935	Douglas O-38 biplanes are assigned to the 108 <sup>th</sup> Observation Squadron.
1937	Performed levee reconnaissance missions, food and medicine drops over flood ravaged Southern Illinois.
1940	4,800 members of the 108 <sup>th</sup> mobilized for war. North American O-47 biplanes are assigned to the 108 <sup>th</sup> Observation Squadron.
1941	Order to active service in February. Missions included anti-submarine patrols, search and rescue over the Pacific Ocean and Caribbean Sea, mail deliver to troops in Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and Guatemala.
1943	108 <sup>th</sup> Observation Squadron was deactivated and its members were assigned to active duty units.
1947	56 <sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing is succeeded by the 66th Fighter Wing and with it came the 344 <sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group later redesignated to the 126 <sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group.
1950	66 <sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing is redesignated to the 126 <sup>th</sup> Composite Wing.
1951	126 <sup>th</sup> Composite Wing becomes the 126 <sup>th</sup> Bombardment Wing with assigned units 126 <sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group, the 168 <sup>th</sup> Bombardment Squadron and the reactivated 108 <sup>th</sup> Bombardment Squadron. Martin B-26 "Marauder" and Douglas C-47 "Sky Train" are assigned.
1951	126 <sup>th</sup> Bombardment Wing activated to support the Korean Conflict at Merignac Air Base in Bordeaux, France then later relocated to Laon Air Base, in France.
1953	The 126 <sup>th</sup> Bombardment Wing becomes the 126 <sup>th</sup> Fighter-Bomber Wing equipped with F-51 "Mustang" aircraft.
1955	The F-84 "Thunderstreak" replaces the F-51 and the wing and its assigned units becomes the 126 <sup>th</sup> Fighter-Interceptor.
1957	The 108 <sup>th</sup> Interceptor Squadron converts from F-84's to F-86L "Sabrejet".
1958	The 126 <sup>th</sup> Fighter-Interceptor Wing is redesignated to the 126 <sup>th</sup> Air Defense Wing.
1961	The 126 <sup>th</sup> Air Defense Wing, later redesignated to the 126 <sup>th</sup> Air Refueling Wing, flies the first Air National Guard air-refueling mission. KC-97 "Stratotanker" is assigned.
1963	The 126 <sup>th</sup> Air Refueling Wing is the first to mid-air refuel the elite Air Force Thunderbirds.
1964	Operation READY GO was the first non-stop flight of Air National Guard fighters across the Atlantic Ocean.

1967	Operation Creek Party kicks off to provide air refueling to the United States Air Forces in Europe (USAFE) aircraft from Rhein-Main Air Base in West Germany.
1968	200 members of the 126 <sup>th</sup> Air Refueling Wing ordered to federal active duty to aid federal troops to quell civil disturbances in response to the Vietnam War.
1976	KC-135A "Stratotanker" is assigned to the 126 <sup>th</sup> Air Refueling Wing.
1983	KC-135E "Stratotanker" is assigned to the 126 <sup>th</sup> Air Refueling Wing.
1990, Aug	Colonel Harold E. Keistler assumed command over 700 guard, active duty and reserve personnel in Moron Air Base, Spain in support of Operation Desert Shield.
1990, Dec	The entire fleet of KC-135's and 260 personnel from the 126 <sup>th</sup> formed the 1712 Air Refueling Wing (Provisional) in the United Arab Emirates commanded by Colonel Harold E. Keistler in support of Operation Desert Storm.
1993	Over 700 personnel from the 126 <sup>th</sup> Air Refueling Wing served on active duty to support the Illinois National Guard's flood control mission in Southern Illinois.
1997	The 126 <sup>th</sup> Air Refueling Wing picks up host responsibility at O'Hare Air Reserve Station after the 1995 Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) decision to disband the 928 <sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing and relocate the 126 <sup>th</sup> Air Refueling Wing to Scott Air Force Base in July of 1999.
1999	On July 28 <sup>th</sup> the last KC-135E "Stratotanker" departed for the last time from O'Hare Air Reserve Station to its new home at Scott Air Force Base. More than 2.5 million tons of cargo was moved over the road and in the air without any major accidents.
2000	The 126 <sup>th</sup> Air Refueling Wing became the first E-model KC-135 unit in the Air National Guard to complete the Pacer CRAG conversion.
2001	The entire 126 <sup>th</sup> Security Forces was activate to provide base and airport security. The 126 <sup>th</sup> Maintenance and Operations Squadrons were activated to support Combat Air Patrols and alert missions.
2003	250 members and eight aircraft were deployed to Lajes Air Base in Portugal to form the 492 <sup>nd</sup> Air Expeditionary Group commanded by Brigadier General Harold E. Keistler to support Operation Iraqi Freedom.
2004	Deployed Expeditionary Combat Support (ESC) personnel from Security Forces, Transportation, Civil Engineering and Chaplain to CENTCOM to support ongoing war on terrorism.
2005	Deploy approximately 50 personnel to Middle East to support the Global War on Terrorism.